DECEMBER 2015

PERSPECTIVES

A publication for members of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors

FROM WHERE I SIT

HEAR FROM A WIDE VARIETY OF VOICES INCLUDING VICE PRESIDENTS, PARENTS, VOLUNTEERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Topics include Relevancy, Necessary Change, Strengthening Partnerships, A Closer Look at Our Profession and more.

The men and women working directly with our communities are challenged every day.

We are being scrutinized by students, parents, alumni, faculty and university administrators.

We are being asked to be problem-solvers, mediators, conduct officers, academic coaches, housing specialists, crisis responders and media liaisons, all while remaining committed to the development of our students and staff.

The expectations have never been higher and the consequences of failing to act have never been greater.Your support has never been needed more.

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Each issue of Perspectives is an enormous undertaking for our team. Take this issue for example. After contacting over 25 potential contributors, scanning through nearly 110 responses to our questions, editing them, arranging the responses into a meaningful order for our readers, and watching everything go through design work, we have our final issue of 2015. Our team is incredible! In six short months, we produced three substantial issues of Perspectives, getting our publication back in order and ready to take on 2016. So let me first start my letter with a heartfelt thank you to our editorial team who gave hours upon hours to bring Perspectives to life over the past six months.

This issue was fascinating to pull together. We wanted to hear from a wide variety of voices who could share their thoughts in a critical and engaging manner from the seat in which they sit. Sometimes we approach our work with students, volunteers, campus administrators, and fellow colleagues solely from our own lenses. Other times, we only get to interact with these individuals during times of stress and conflict, which can distort how we view that person or their work. The responses to our many questions demonstrate the varied approaches, thoughts, practices, beliefs, and behaviors we could and should consider. It is more than just context for us to read and fill the gaps of our knowledge. This is an affirmation of why it is so important to approach working with fraternities and sororities in a multi-disciplinary way. No one of us has the answer, but together we could create lasting and impactful change.

It is not often we get to have a front row seat to an incredible panel of professionals and volunteers who genuinely care about the work we do, the people we serve, and the missions we espouse. I invite you to read the words of others, consider them within your context, and identify strategies that you can employ in your work.

Sincerely,

Annie Carlson Welch

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

This issue of Perspectives is one I find quite intriguing. We are asking important questions and obtaining the points of view of a wide constituent base. As I read through the issue, the most exciting thing is we are hearing from a range of powerful voices that haven't necessarily been at the forefront. This is not because their voices don't matter, but rather due to the fact they are usually the supporters and advocates behind the scenes. Each person who has contributed to this edition has a certain touchpoint with the fraternity and sorority experience and chooses to stay engaged at his/her preference.

What I believe the most powerful is each contributor's genuine response gives us the unedited raw perspective that we, quite honestly, need to hear. We can rave about what is going well, and the many rewards fraternity and sorority membership may bring, but we have to dig deeper and stare our challenges directly in the face if we are to see any change or growth. This issue brings us to that point. It celebrates, yet challenges. This issue offers approaches we all can appreciate (regardless of how difficult it might be) and work towards. When the scrutiny and counterproductive culture stares us in the face, it is hard to argue "the good" that fraternities and sororities bring to the undergraduate experience, let alone the mission of the institution. As you read this issue, I ask you take a moment to hear the words that are being shared. Observe the viewpoints from which a critical lens on the experience is given. Lastly, be ready to be part of the solutions on the horizon to effect positive change.

Sincerely,

Veronica Moore

Veronica Moore

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Perspectives is the official publication of the Association of Fraternity/Sorority Advisors, Inc. (AFA). Views expressed are those of the individual authors/contributors/advertisers and are not necessarily those of the Association. AFA encourages the submission of articles, essays, ideas and advertisements. Submissions should be directed to the Editor, advertising queries to the staff.

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IN THIS ISSUE

RELEVANCY

"The world we live in today is vastly different than even five years ago. We are deep into the knowledge economy where skill competencies, communication aptitudes, and learning agility are determining employability. Innovation and technology change the landscape of our work and personal life. Yet, I am hard pressed to find much that has changed across the fraternity/sorority landscape," Stephannie Bailey. **Page 10**

NECESSARY CHANGE

"College fraternity and sorority members, national organizations, professional associations, and campuses need to revolutionize what has become the status quo of the fraternity/sorority movement. Let's recalibrate our thinking, reject status quo, and be excellent," Dick McKaig. **Page 13**

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

"The challenges I believe come about as a result of poor communication, differing expectations, and an incongruent understanding or perhaps misconception about why these organizations exist in the first place," Les Cook. **Page 24**

A CLOSER LOOK AT OUR PROFESSION

"Fraternities and sororities can be the training ground for our future world leaders providing opportunities and experiences for vital skill development. Fraternity and sorority professionals will need to develop the competence to assist student leaders and general chapter members to nurture these skills," Gavin Henning. **Page 27**

COLUMNS AND HIGHLIGHTS

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"I wanted to reach out to you with regards to the October Perspectives magazine that I received. I would just like to applaud AFA for providing such a great resource for campus and headquarters based professionals. This is definitely a hot topic, and there is SO much useful information within the publication."

Hillary Stahl, Education Program Coordinator, Kappa Kappa Gamma

ON SOCIAL MEDIA

On Twitter From @AlexDudek1

Loving the new issue of #afaperspecives from @AFA1976. It's fueling practically all my graduate work. Thanks @CourtLMc and @DoctorGentry

On Facebook from Mandy Lee Womack

To my brave colleague on Page 27 of Perspectives. You are not alone. Thank you for sharing your story so that I can understand just a little bit more as I serve students.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Voice your feedback – anything that's on your mind – whether good or bad, compliments or criticisms, we want to hear it.

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EMAIL *PERSPECTIVES* EDITOR AT AWCARLSO@NCSU.EDU

the gathering
June 7 - 10, 2016 | Rocky Mountain National Park | Estes Park, CO | thegathering.aflv.org
The Gathering is created by: AFLV and endorsed by: afa ASSOCIATION OF FRATERNITY | SORORITY ADVISORS

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STEPHANNIE BAILEY

Stephannie Bailey's professional career has spanned work in for-profit and non-for profit organizations with focus on creating opportunities for people to be professionally and personally developed. She spent the last decade specifically focused on women's leadership as the Executive Director of The Leadership Institute - Women with Purpose and then the Executive Director of Alpha Gamma Delta Fraternity. After spending the last year working for a boutique consulting firm, Stephannie is returning to the fraternal community as the Senior Director of Philanthropy for Delta Upsilon Educational Fraternity.

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JILL BORTEL

Jill Bortel is a retired elementary school teacher and has served as the advisor for the Beta Mu chapter of Alpha Xi Delta at Bowling Green State University (BGSU) for 42 years. Throughout her time in this role, she has won numerous awards through BGSU and the national fraternity for her commitment and contributions to Alpha Xi Delta and the members she advises.

LES COOK

Les P. Cook serves as the Vice President for Student Affairs and Advancement at Michigan Technological University, overseeing the areas of: advancement, alumni relations, dean of students, enrollment, and marketing and communications. He is a member of Sigma Nu from Utah State University and has been very involved with LeaderShape and the National Orientation Directors Association (NODA).

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Jeffrey Cufaude is an architect of ideas, working to build communities of ideas and idealists through his writing, facilitation, consulting, and speaking. His areas of work include strategy think tanks bringing fresh eyes and thinking to critical questions; volunteer and staff development workshops and retreats; content design and facilitation of leadership conferences and learning experiences; and major keynote presentations.

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Charles G. Eberly is Professor Emeritus of Counseling and Student Development at Eastern Illinois University. He was awarded the AFA Robert Schaffer Award and the Sigma Phi Epsilon Order of the Golden Heart, both in 2003, for his years of work mentoring college student affairs graduate students and undergraduate fraternity members. In 2013, the NIC presented him with an Award of Merit for his years of volunteer service to college fraternities.

JOE GILMAN

Joe Gilman is a Vice President for AT&T, the current Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Sigma Nu Educational Foundation, and the past Regent (national president) for Sigma Nu. With a passion for hazing prevention, Joe is a founding board member of HazingPrevention.Org and the immediate past president for HPO.

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Dr. Juan R. Guardia previously served as Assistant Vice President for Student Affairs at Northeastern Illinois University and Adjunct Faculty in the Higher Education program at Loyola University Chicago. Juan is a Board of Trustees member for Phi Iota Alpha Fraternity, Inc.

GAVIN HENNING

Gavin currently serves as President of ACPA – College Student Educators International furthering its mission to foster college student learning and development. Gavin is a board member on the Council for Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS), and serves on the CAS Executive Committee as Director for Outreach. In addition, he is the founder of Student Affairs Assessment Leaders (SAAL), an international organization supporting educators who coordinate assessment for divisions of student affairs.

DIANE JABLONSKI

Diane serves as the president of the Drexel Family Association, which provides parents and family members a network of support while their students are on campus. Her daughter and son both currently attend Drexel University. Her daughter, Lauren, is a member of Delta Phi Epsilon Sorority and pursuing her Ph.D. Her son, Kevin, is a member of Phi Sigma Pi Honor Fraternity and is pursuing a self-directed bachelor's.

LEVESTER JOHNSON

Dr. Levester Johnson is the Vice President for Student Affairs at Butler. He attended Marquette University, University of Southern Illinois-Carbondale, and Indiana University. He has been involved in numerous roles within NASPA, including Chair of the Board of Directors.

JENNIFER JONES

Jennifer is the Executive Director of Student Life, Southern Methodist University and serves as the current President of the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Incorporated.

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JASON KILMER

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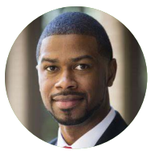
Lianne lost her son, Harrison, an accomplished golfer, at Lenoir-Rhyne University in North Carolina in 2009 due to a fatal head injury during an alleged fraternity hazing activity. He was a new member of Theta Chi Fraternity. She is now a volunteer for HazingPrevention.org, speaks on the dangers of hazing at schools around her area, and is active in speaking out for hazing legislation. She is a sales professional and resides in Tampa, FL, with her husband, Brian.

DICK MCKAIG

Prior to his retirement in 2009, Dick McKaig served as the Dean of Students, Vice Provost for Student Affairs, and Associate Professor of Education at Indiana University. Dick has been an integral part of fraternity and sorority life, having served as the Director of the Interfraternity Institute (IFI) in additional to many other pivotal roles.



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SHANE WINDMEYER

Shane L. Windmeyer, M.S., Ed. is a best-selling author, LGBTQ campus pioneer and civil rights champion. He is founder and executive director of Campus Pride, the leading national LGBTQ organization for student leaders and campus organizations working to build future leaders and create safer campus communities.

relevancy.

"The world we live in today is vastly different than even five years ago. We are deep into the knowledge economy where skill competencies, communication aptitudes, and learning agility are determining employability. Innovation and technology change the landscape of our work and personal life. Yet, I am hard pressed to find much that has changed across the fraternity/sorority landscape."
-Stephannie Bailey

Q: Are fraternities and sororities relevant in today's college community?

Dick McKaig: A quick review of the mission/purpose statements for fraternities and sororities shows many common themes for why these groups exist. Among the more frequently mentioned reasons are: promote lifelong friendship, develop leaders, achieve equal justice, foster personal growth, enhance community involvement, develop character, and encourage good scholarship. Among the frequently cited values of these groups are: trust, personal integrity, honor, respect, and responsibility. How could anyone suggest groups focused on such purposes and values are not relevant today? One might argue that such groups are now more important and relevant than ever. The more difficult question would be, are fraternities and sororities meeting the expectations for which they were established? In the 1980s, Dr. Herman B. Wells, NIC Gold Medal recipient, past President of Indiana University, and former member of the High Council of Sigma Nu, wrote about his concern for the gap between fraternal ideals and fraternal behavior. Recent headlines seem to suggest that gap has never been wider. While I tend not to believe that to be true (thanks to campus-based efforts and interfraternal coalitions to emphasize assessment, standards, and values education), this gap between ideals and behavior remains a significant concern.

Stephannie Bailey: It depends on how you define relevant. If a relevant experience is one offering social engagement, a chance to hold a "leadership position," community service, and defined events for members, then sure, the experience is relevant.

When I juxtapose today's modern, informed, exposed, and diverse undergraduate population against the enormous need for critical thinking, innovation, resourcefulness, and resilience across the private and social sector today, no – I do not think most fraternities and sororities are offering a relevant experience. Additionally, I think the soaring membership numbers are lulling organizations and campuses into believing every woman (or man) is getting what was promised when they were invited to join. In many cases, that is simply not true.

The world we live in today is vastly different than even five years ago. We are deep into the knowledge economy where skill competencies, communication aptitudes, and learning agility are determining employability. Innovation and technology change the landscape of our work and personal life. Yet, I am hard pressed to find much that has changed across the fraternity/sorority landscape. Sure, there are a few small pockets of innovation; however, aside from astronomical chapter sizes and a significant uptick in negative media attention, I see little change. The relevant experience must meet today's students where they are while also complementing the academic environment so students are prepared for life and service in the global economy.

I believe the tradition of sorority (and fraternity) should be about the quality and relevancy of the experience in the current environment; changing with the needs of today's modern student. Tradition does not mean we perpetuate our personal experiences. Yet, time and time again, we make it about us. Simply put – it's not about us. It's about them.

Karyn Sneath: We are relevant when we collectively deliver what we promise. Fraternities and sororities can truly be a "one-stop-shop" for core developmental needs of college students, when done right. We provide engagement opportunities not just for the elected leaders but for all members. Chapters serve as a good glue for the institution – students stay in school, fall in love with their alma mater, and continue their connection to their colleges/universities after they graduate. We instill a sense of selflessness with hands-on, meaningful, and emotionally connected service experiences. With those experiences we are able to strengthen a student's emotional intelligence and empathy for others. We help students succeed in the classroom and teach time management and study skills which provide structure and create good habits. We create an environment for learning how to live with (many times literally) other people very different from ourselves. We can and should be fostering a sense of family that doesn't discount nor demean; truly, we can create a family of choice which encourages and expects responsibility, respect, fairness, and deep care for each other.

Walter Parrish: Fraternities and sororities are, undoubtedly, relevant to the collegiate experience and campus community. Although there has been a history of physical hazing, structural and overt racism, discriminatory and exclusionary behaviors, and concerns for sexual assault prevention and awareness from fraternity and sorority members in the last decade, many campuses indicate fraternity and sorority members have a higher GPA than non-members. Additionally, fraternities and sororities are often (or should be) at the forefront of civic engagement and service, philanthropy, and overall campus involvement. Fraternity and sorority life provides students with an experience that enhances learning, leadership development, and character building within a community (NSSE, 2011).

Perhaps one of the most effective outcomes of these fraternal organizations is the sense of belonging they foster, especially for historically underrepresented and marginalized students. Becoming a member of an organization includes kinship formation and a stronger connection to the institution. Having a network of peers who share similar values and interests positively impacts belongingness and retention rates. Members are also more satisfied with their collegiate experience and more academically and socially successful (Astin, 1977).

"Perhaps one of the most effective outcomes of these fraternal organizations is the sense of belonging they foster, especially for historically underrepresented and marginalized students."
- Walter Parrish

References:

Astin, A. W. (1977). *Four critical years: Effects of college on beliefs, attitudes, and knowledge.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (2011). *Fostering student engagement campus wide—annual results 2011.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research.

Kate Schaeffer: I think fraternities and sororities are very relevant in today's college community. Fraternities and sororities can have a tremendous positive impact on college students, even those who are not members of their organizations. The sense of community can be a large protective factor for those who are struggling, and the sense of engagement is associated with higher success and well-being in college. Further, the ability to use those affiliations to promote things such as violence prevention, philanthropy, and focus on academic success enables college administrators to have student buy-in and engagement.

Q: What could make fraternities and sororities more relevant in today's college community?

Kate Schaeffer: I think the relevance of fraternities and sororities in today's world ebbs and flows in the eyes of the onlooker due to individual actions. When one organization has issues, it reflects on the entire organization at a national level, and it is prime material for the media. Unfortunately, members of fraternities and sororities have a bias against them, especially in regard to alcohol and drug use, sexual violence, and hazing. When one person's actions reinforce this bias, the entire fraternity/sorority community is affected. To counter that, and thus become more relevant, fraternities and sororities should not only continue to educate their members, but also lead societal change.

Shane Windmeyer: Listening to our students and then taking action. By far, when it comes to furthering LGBTQ issues, it has been students who were the most proactive in our leadership ranks of fraternities and sororities. And, not surprisingly, it has been alumnae or administrators holding back the progress. All and all, we must not be fearful to change even if it means making tough choices. We must listen, learn, and embrace change – that is the ultimate way to remain relevant.

"Despite the current electronic romance with social media, the human, face-to-face interaction fostered by membership in campus student groups is very likely more important to healthy emotional and cognitive growth than any other single element outside the classroom. Ideas are not honed in a vacuum; they must be tested, debated, and nurtured with the input of close friends in a social environment."
-Charles Eberly

Charles Eberly: In the current social/emotional lives of college students, my impression is affiliating with one or more student groups (including general fraternities and sororities) is critically essential to healthy student development. Despite the current electronic romance with social media, the human, face-to-face interaction fostered by membership in campus student groups is very likely more important to healthy emotional and cognitive growth than any other single element outside the classroom. Ideas are not honed in a vacuum; they must be tested, debated, and nurtured with the input of close friends in a social environment. What better means of doing so than among a group of like minded, supportive but sometimes contentious colleagues? The mind does not learn when the heart is not healthy. In the process, important skills in human social interaction, persuasion, negotiation, and argumentation are developed that cannot be otherwise effectively polished.

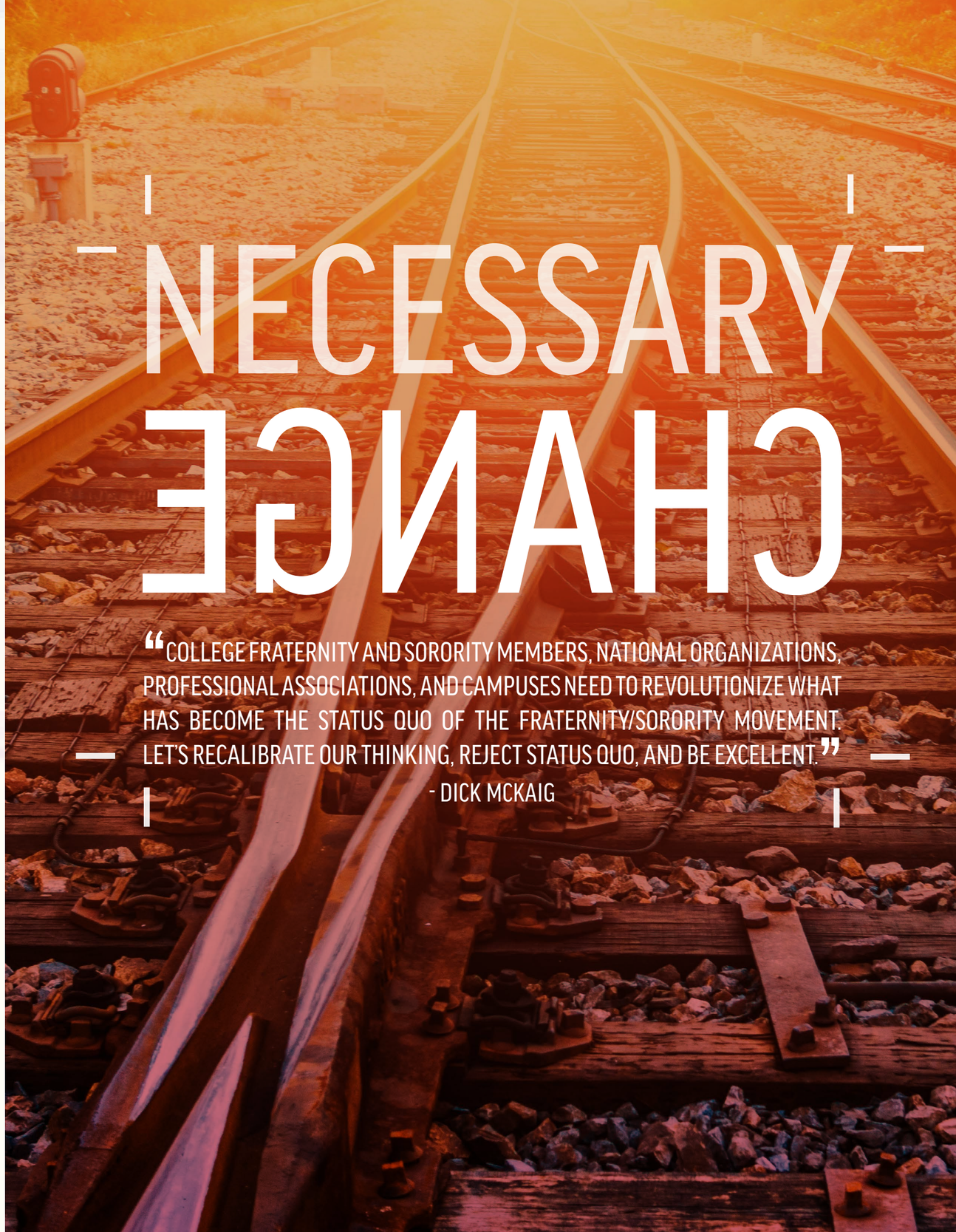
Jennifer Jones: If they truly live their values and know what those are. Undergraduate members attract prospective members through social means. I think this is a misstep. You are getting what you pay for. Then, when it comes to understanding the values and why the organizations were created in the first place, there is no buy in.

Gavin Henning: Fraternities and sororities can provide experiences to help students develop the skills and knowledge many colleges and universities are trying to foster. The Essential Learning Outcomes (n.d.) espoused by the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) outline many of these skills, which includes critical thinking, communication, teamwork, problem solving, civic engagement, intercultural knowledge, and ethical reasoning. If these organizations can demonstrate the positive impact they have on student outcomes, college administrators will view them as part of solution to advancing student learning and success.

Dan Bureau: The question of relevance depends on whom you ask. When I think of relevance, fraternities and sororities are relevant by contributing to institutional goals of student learning, retention and overall success. Fraternities and sororities can certainly do all of these things, but the professionals who work with these organizations need to document through good evidence that membership does indeed contribute to these goals. It is not enough to say members are retained higher. What factors influence students to stay? It is not enough to say students learn skills in these organizations: they likely learn skills in many of their college experiences. We can be seen as relevant and contributory if we have evidence our experience makes a difference and contributes toward institutional goals.

Additionally, we have to eliminate the issues that undermine the role fraternities (and to some extent sororities) can play on a campus like hazing, particularly with alcohol for historically White groups and violent hazing with historically African American and Asian American groups. Additionally, issues of alcohol misuse and abuse, sexual assault, and a lack of cultural competence of members will also be issues that undermine our relevance. What we have come to know is that a small portion of members participate in truly negative behaviors, but it is clear that not enough step up to intervene and stop these instances from happening.

Finally, the distinctive function of values exploration and development can be an important niche for fraternities and sororities. The challenges of values development have been well-documented so it will be hard to achieve these goals, but it is still an effort that is important given our responsibility to move students along key developmental processes.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"COLLEGE FRATERNITY AND SORORITY MEMBERS, NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, AND CAMPUSES NEED TO REVOLUTIONIZE WHAT HAS BECOME THE STATUS QUO OF THE FRATERNITY/SORORITY MOVEMENT. LET'S RECALIBRATE OUR THINKING, REJECT STATUS QUO, AND BE EXCELLENT."
- DICK MCKAIG

WHAT DO YOU SEE IS THE GREATEST CHANGE FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES SHOULD BE FOCUSING ON?

Dick McKaig: Older fraternity/sorority alumni often reflect on the many important life lessons they learned through their undergraduate chapter experience. They attribute such learning, in large part, to the chapter model of self-governance which afforded them the resulting opportunity to learn to take responsibility for themselves and their group. Though occurring in a web of campus and national organization rules, the opportunity for independent leadership was real.

Fraternities and sororities strive for that same experience today. But today's college students now face significant challenges and distractions more serious than before. Their ability to cope with these issues seems no better, and probably worse, than previous generations. Add environment technology-driven advancements in communication, which allow almost immediate distribution of information, a reduced sense of privacy, and the ability to document for posterity almost any occurring action, and you have monumental challenges for chapter management. Another way to say it is, when I was an undergraduate, there were fewer options/challenges/distractions, and as a result the mistakes that occurred in the trial-and-error learning process of self-governance were less serious and less frequently front page news across the country. I had time to mature.

"ANOTHER WAY TO SAY IT IS, WHEN I WAS AN UNDERGRADUATE, THERE WERE FEWER OPTIONS/CHALLENGES/DISTRACTIONS, AND AS A RESULT THE MISTAKES THAT OCCURRED IN THE TRIAL-AND-ERROR LEARNING PROCESS OF SELF-GOVERNANCE WERE LESS SERIOUS AND LESS FREQUENTLY FRONT PAGE NEWS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. I HAD TIME TO MATURE."
- DICK MCKAIG

I don't yearn for the good old days, but I would suggest we have not adequately addressed the change these new realities bring. How can we provide adequate structure (expectations, regulations) and support (campus staff, informed and engaged alumni advisors, national organization expertise) for a less-prepared chapter member and still maintain a self-governing chapter experience that creates the learning environment which is known to be so powerful? What is the new appropriate balance of challenge and support for this generation?

Tim Reuter: We are offering 21st century programs and utilizing 21st century delivery methods for 19th century personas and 19th century student journeys through fraternity/sorority. Thus, I think the greatest challenge facing fraternities and sororities is achieving a member experience meeting both the needs of today's college student and resonates with their maturational desires, yet is strong enough to withstand the socio-environmental, cultural, political and bottom-line pressures that influence it. I believe there is an increasing need to stop over-programming, go back to basics, and create spaces, experiences and environments enabling people to find and place focus in their lives. I also believe intensive customer experience work and outside-in design approaches must be applied to student/member programs and comprehensive services.

Stephannie Bailey: Suppression of independent thought is the most critical issue for the women's groups.

The list of issues for our organizations continues to include usual suspects such as the misuse and abuse of alcohol, sexual assault, super-sized chapters, fragmented "sisterhood," negative PR, lack of inclusivity, the antiquated formal recruitment structure, Release Figures Methodology, and the Manual of Information. However, I have come to learn, through experience, the root of these issues is the continued suppression of thought. This is the dark secret of sororities no one wants to challenge. I know because I've been there myself. There is pressure to not cause problems, to not break rank, to not question those who "have years of experience" – in the end this is being taught to women young and old. Often it is quietly modeled up and down the proverbial "chains of command." I am here to boldly say we are fooling ourselves if we are not willing to be honest about the impact of this approach on our members. Often the best women are not joining, and if they do, talented women are regularly leaving our chapters, our campus administrations, our volunteer ranks, our boards of directors, and our staff teams. They are not willing to have their thoughts suppressed.

I have worked in large corporations (General Motors and McKesson) and now a very small, entrepreneurial organization. I have worked for publicly held companies, and I have run three non-profits over the past decade. Based on my experience in modern workplaces, independent thought is valued, and those who bring it are in high demand. We are paid to bring our best minds to the table to solve problems. Building a culture which regularly debates, pushes boundaries, encourages failure, moves with agility, and expects courageous and challenging conversations will foster long-term sustainability and viability for an organization. Our women are not being prepared for success in these environments. In today's sorority experience independent thoughts may be welcomed in small, quiet circles they are not broadly or publicly encouraged.

For those who are skeptical, or even offended at my assertion, let's take a quick look at a few examples where independent thought is suppressed throughout the sorority experience. Women's experiences are constructed around manuals of policies and procedures. Organizational leaders at all levels are afraid to stand up for what they believe in the face of being perceived as "breaking rank" with their Panhellenic Council, campus community, or the NPC. We use a formulaic and rigid recruitment system created decades ago as the primary point of entry for prospective members. Collegiate women are required to accept an arbitrary number of women through the recruitment process, regardless of whether the chapter believes they would be good members. We allow chapter advisors to bully, threaten, cajole, or otherwise control the decisions of our undergraduate women. Campus professionals will say our extension efforts would be more successful if we would focus on recruiting "traditional" sorority women, and we feel great pressure to acquiesce. We knowingly allow the traditions of a campus to supplant the desires of today's collegiate members. New chapters started through extension will experience great success, and then be forced to recruit from the traditional pool of candidates through formal recruitment. National sorority leadership continues to pander to the desires and agendas of fraternities. My friends, when we allow these things to occur we are sending a powerful message to both women and men. We are suppressing independent thought.

By fostering independent thought among sorority women I believe we can make this experience relevant and ultimately change the world. Doing so will require great effort. We must be willing to understand our personal experience is not diminished by changing and innovating to meet the needs of today's members. We must honestly listen to others and humbly admit when we don't have all the answers. Perhaps most importantly, we must make a safe space for all ideas and challenges. Only then can we create a relevant experience which will empower our members to be successful within our rapidly changing global economy and ultimately change the world.

Charles Eberly: Fraternities and sororities have been in the process of change since their very founding simply because, as John Robson wrote in the 1976 Baird's Manual, they are a microcosm of the wider society. As society is constantly in a state of change, so are the members of fraternities and sororities and the organizations of which they are a part. The undergraduates who join fraternities and sororities, by their very nature, change the organizations they join across time, and this is in spite of the inertia against change I find is often associated with well meaning older alumni, who would like organizations to remain much as they were when they were undergraduates (and that, too, changes according to the number of decades away from the college experience those alumni find themselves).

I think undergraduates ride the crest of societal change, and that wave of new ideas, thoughts, relationships, and interactions they are experiencing is no more apparent than on the college campus. What changes are most supported by any given undergraduate, or observer, depends on that person's philosophical perspective.

How will fraternity and sorority organizations change? They are already doing so! The rise of new organizations continues well into the present century. The latest on the scene are the organizations specifically founded on nurturing multiculturalism, in whatever of several forms that multiculturalism is framed. The next stage of growth, or change, is for persons of all cultural identifications to be openly sought and encouraged to join any of the many fraternities and sororities currently seeking new members. The structure of the old social system on which organizations were founded a century or more ago was predicated on a foundation of fear of difference among men, women, and groups. Much of that "fear" has been defused or debunked in the current wider, open post-modern society, and it is time, in my opinion, for all groups and their members to abandon fear and embrace acceptance. In doing so, fraternities and sororities will lead society into a much greater understanding and appreciation for the contributions of all individuals without regard to what have in the past been limiting descriptive characteristics.

"THERE IS PRESSURE TO NOT CAUSE PROBLEMS, TO NOT BREAK RANK, TO NOT QUESTION THOSE WHO "HAVE YEARS OF EXPERIENCE" – IN THE END THIS IS BEING TAUGHT TO WOMEN YOUNG AND OLD. OFTEN IT IS QUIETLY MODELED UP AND DOWN THE PROVERBIAL "CHAINS OF COMMAND." I AM HERE TO BOLDLY SAY WE ARE FOOLING OURSELVES IF WE ARE NOT WILLING TO BE HONEST ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THIS APPROACH ON OUR MEMBERS."
-STEPHANNIE BAILEY

Levester Johnson: Given the spotlight placed on Title IX and our challenge within higher education to eradicate sexual misconduct on our college campuses, fraternities and sororities would be well served to place substantial time, effort, and resources toward this goal. It matters not whether college campuses and particular subpopulations within them have been fairly or unfairly judged regarding our ability to address this issue in the past. What matters is we accept the challenge to develop effective policies meeting the needs of all students affected when incidents occur, we develop a culture of care and support for victims of sexual misconduct, and we educate our students and provide them the necessary bystander training and skills to prevent these incidents from ever taking place.

Fraternities and sororities are in a unique position to make significant progress on all these fronts given the leadership training provided and influence they possess on campus. I would highly recommend fraternities and sororities review and revamp their leadership training programs to include these important elements not only for their membership, but so their fraternity and sorority leaders might serve as impactful models within their leadership roles for the rest of the campus community and their peers.

Brett Sokolow: On too many college campuses, fraternities have ceased to be a net positive for campus communities. History, legacy, and inertia have enabled fraternities to survive in their current form well past their useful lifespan. That has bought fraternities extra time, but time will run out unless there is a course correction. So, the only change to focus on is the change that ensures survival – becoming a net positive contributor to the mission, community, and culture of higher learning. I'm agnostic about fraternity and sorority survival, to be frank. If the system is a net positive, it should survive. If it is a net negative, it should not. I'm not sure why that isn't everyone's position.

"AS LEADERS ON CAMPUS (AND IN THE WORKFORCE), WE HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO USE OUR POWER FOR PROMOTING JUSTICE AND EQUALITY AND BECOME BETTER MEN AND WOMEN. THE FOCUS SHOULD NOT BE ON FLAUNTING PRIVILEGE, DEGRADATION OR SEEKING PERSONAL GAIN. THAT ATTITUDE IS THE ANTITHESIS OF WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A FRATERNITY MAN AND SORORITY WOMAN."
- WALTER PARRISH

Walter Parrish: Like many functional areas, the fraternity and sorority community has issues that should be addressed and reformed; topics including homophobia, classism, hazing, alcoholism, etc. However, racism and discrimination resonate most with me. To some fraternity and sorority members, racism within the community is unfeasible or imaginary. But within the last few years, social media has been saturated with screenshots, pictures, and videos that illuminate discriminatory practices throughout chapters across the nation.

One can assume this is due to the increase in Internet media sharing, or perhaps students are more candid about their prejudices. In either case, it is happening by fraternity and sorority members; members who have influence on campus. Fraternity and sorority men and women possess a significant amount of social capital at their institutions and often continue to be influential as alumni through donations and engagement. However, Ben Parker, creator of Spider-Man, told us, "Remember: with great power comes great responsibility." As leaders on campus (and in the workforce), we have an obligation to use our power for promoting justice and equality and become better men and women. The focus should not be on flaunting privilege, degradation or seeking personal gain. That attitude is the antithesis of what it means to be a fraternity man and sorority woman.

Juan Guardia: I strongly believe fraternities and sororities should be focused on the overall, holistic development of its members: academic, personal, and social. Too many times our organizations focus heavily on one of these more than another. Education should continually be provided by fraternities and sororities to our members to find the best balance in helping them successfully navigate these experiences.

Shane Windmeyer: Brotherhood or sisterhood. What is it? Sure it is the foundation as to why we exist as organizations, but how do we define it? How is it manifested? And most importantly, why is it important or have value? Transgender members exist and have always been part of our organizations; they are our brothers and sisters. From a transgender person's perspective, must we determine how we define brotherhood or sisterhood by someone's birth sex? Or is it about the gender identity of the person, supporting the values of brotherhood or sisterhood? If we truly understand what is brotherhood and sisterhood, we know the answer is literally at the heart of who we are and what we claim to do.

Les Cook: Stop making excuses, playing the blame game, and ignoring the fact we have a problem. And I'm not necessarily talking about our students; the time has come for inter/national organizations and college/university leaders to take a stand. Every day we are bombarded with news stories, media blasts and sickening news about the latest hazing incident, sexual violence, and inappropriate behavior on our campuses. Not all of this can be pointed at our fraternities and sororities; however, much of the negative behavior that does occur can.

Higher Education leaders, headquarters, professional organizations, and to some extent, the public in general have become numb to this behavior. We seem to be okay with accepting what is, and I don't think we should. It's time to quit making excuses, jumping to conclusions and blaming others, and time to acknowledge that we have a problem. Let's own this. Let's act. What does this mean?

For most organizations it means taking a close look at those principles, values, and ideals these organizations were founded on and determining how these are best lived. College fraternity and sorority members, national organizations, professional associations, and campuses need to revolutionize what has become the status quo of the fraternity/sorority movement. Let's recalibrate our thinking, reject status quo, and be excellent. Doing this won't be easy, and it involves taking a hard look at why fraternities and sororities exist in the first place. Do students join to be average or for something greater than themselves? Are chapters adding value to the lives of students or do they merely exist for the sake of existing? Is there agreement across campuses that Greeks contribute to student success? Are national organizations willing to align with the mission and values embraced in higher education or do they view the endeavor as more of a business enterprise? Are students being positively transformed by the Greek life experience or is membership just another outlet to people and parties?

College and University leaders, inter/national offices, professional associations, and chapter alumni must work together to make the necessary change happen. We need to come together and declare we're not going to allow ludicrous or harmful behavior of any form. We must agree on the importance of student learning and take the lead in demonstrating student success and preparing graduates for lifelong success is central to our mission. If we do not, then in time fraternities and sororities may also become something we knew in our past.

FROM THE DESK OF VICE PRESIDENTS

WHAT DOES FRATERNITY AND SORORITY LIFE NEED TO DO IN ORDER TO SUPPORT THE EDUCATIONAL MISSION AT YOUR INSTITUTION?

Levester Johnson: Institutions of Higher Education are very much in the business of building community. As such, the tenets of unity, transparency, collegiality, civility, and creation of a welcoming and supportive environment for all students are important during the pursuit of an undergraduate's degree. While it is important groups are able to differentiate themselves from each other in order to recruit members and live out the organization's values, I suggest it is even more important for all fraternities and sororities to see themselves as part of a larger "Greek community" before they focus on their particular organization. I would further suggest, before they see themselves as a fraternity and sorority community, they should see themselves as a member of their institution. Thus the hierarchical order is institution first (mission), fraternity and sorority community next and then their individual fraternity and sorority chapter. If this can become prevailing culture with all campus groups, including fraternities and sororities, the potential exists for fewer negative rivalries and greater accountability for members. This model would mean a member would not only be held to the standards of their organization, but the fraternity and sorority community and institutional codes of ethics/conduct by peers regardless of affiliation. Fraternities and sororities would do well to incorporate educational sessions and activities which promote such allegiance and further partner in the ultimate goal of retention and success of our students. Substantial investment and support for Greek councils would be essential in meeting this challenge.

"I SUGGEST IT IS EVEN MORE IMPORTANT FOR ALL FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES TO SEE THEMSELVES AS PART OF A LARGER "GREEK COMMUNITY" BEFORE THEY FOCUS ON THEIR PARTICULAR ORGANIZATION. I WOULD FURTHER SUGGEST, BEFORE THEY SEE THEMSELVES AS A FRATERNITY AND SORORITY COMMUNITY, THEY SHOULD SEE THEMSELVES AS A MEMBER OF THEIR INSTITUTION."
-LEVESTER JOHNSON

Les Cook: Recently, I had dinner with an alumnus of the University who commented that no matter how well we educate or prepare our students there is no syllabus for life. While this may be true, we do know that healthy, engaged, and committed fraternities/sororities that are devoted to the personal/professional development and well being of their members, can and do have a profound impact both during and beyond their time at the University. These experiences may not always be complete, but they add value to our students and assist in the creation of this syllabus.

Much like the values and principles espoused by many of our fraternities and sororities, the University also has our own values, which are infused into many things we do. These values are centered on creating possibility, building community, inspiring scholarship, and being both accountable and tenacious. Coupling these values with the principles and ideals of our fraternities/sororities can provide rich opportunities for dialogue and learning, platforms for student success and add value to those individuals involved, all of which support the educational mission. Ideally, these happen in tandem with the University.

Our goal at Michigan Tech is to prepare students to create the future. We do this by providing our students rich and robust opportunities to learn both in and out of the classroom. I'd like to think our fraternities/sororities do the same.

TRENDS SHAPING OUR FUTURE

"I wonder if these trends could be reversed if professionals and volunteers working with these organizations changed their approach. The trend of working with the leaders and the troublemakers needs to end."
-Dan Bureau

Q: WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MAJOR TRENDS YOU'VE EXPERIENCED AND WHAT DO YOU THINK THE NEAR FUTURE HOLDS?

Dan Bureau: The same issues are plaguing our organizations as did back when I first started in the field in 1996. Those issues have always been here because 18-22 year olds are going to push boundaries. They often come to us with these beliefs and approaches already in place, so part of the challenge is helping them unlearn these behaviors they feel are acceptable. We've had efforts to help students "return to values" for most of the last 50 years: some chapters and organizations internationally have done better than others. So the issues will continue to plague us, much as police officers will always deal with crime, school teachers will always have to manage behavior, doctors will always have to diagnose illness, etc. It's a part of what we do. If we want these issues to stop, then we have to make tough decisions about closing chapters but also commit to bringing new chapters into our campus community. New chapters will bring exciting opportunities.

When I do campus assessments, I find some of the same issues time and time again: failure of councils to collaborate, a lack of understanding of processes, people worried about IFC academic performance, Panhellenic members participating in too many fun activities masked as philanthropic efforts, culturally-based organizations struggling to find members often due to perceptions by high-achieving students of color who would rather join other organizations than be hazed. These are issues we are not moving the needle on large scale, but there is progress in individual chapters. That may always be the case.

I wonder if these trends could be reversed if professionals and volunteers working with these organizations changed their approach. The trend of working with the leaders and the troublemakers needs to end. Time spent targeting "middle members" is something we must begin to focus on to reverse many of the negative trends we have. Go out there and let people know your agenda. Invite them to participate from the sidelines rather than always blame those who violate the policies and beg those who lead chapters to help you make the change you need.

Finally, sexual assault and misconduct has been an issue for fraternities for far too long. This is a trend that needs reversing. Few fraternity men rape, but not enough intervene when they know they should. It is our most disturbing issue right now and one we must actively work to address.

Q: HOW DO YOU SEE THE LEGAL LANDSCAPE INFLUENCING THE FUTURE OF FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES?

Brett Sokolow: Fraternities – not so much sororities – are being "settled" to death. There is a point at which litigation breaks the system, and that point isn't more than 10 years off, in my opinion. Fraternities are desperate not to set fatal legal precedents, and so the chapters, officers, alumni chapters, house corporations, and inter/national headquarters write check after check to pay the liability away without going to trial. They can't just keep paying forever.

And, the liability of the inter/national headquarters is a big target for the plaintiff's litigators. So far, the courts have supported the argument from the inter/national headquarters that they don't control the chapters. That arms-length canard is being eroded by the legal evolution in how negligence is framed in this country. All organizations are more liable for the actions of their agents today than 20 years ago and subject to greater supervisory duties and training expectations. Ironically, immunity from liability is being eroded by the increasing involvement of the inter/national headquarters in engaging the risk activities of the chapters. The inter/national headquarters are desperately trying to have it both ways, imposing risk mitigation and response policies and structures all the while claiming they have no duty when an injury occurs. This duck-and-cover legal defense strategy can't win out in the long-term. The only choice the national headquarters will have is to fully engage the risks that chapters are engendering, or face the end of self-governance imposed externally from colleges and the courts. Either way, the chapter will cease to exist in its current form. Chapter self-governance has failed, and the chapters of the future – if they exist at all – will be subject to oversight, supervision, and risk management by independent adults who help to assure policies, procedures, and training that transform the net negative to a net positive.

ASSESSING FRATERNAL TRENDS

Q: WHAT APPROACHES/PRACTICES ARE BEST FOR DEMONSTRATING THE RELEVANCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF FRATERNITY/SORORITY LIFE?

Dan Bureau: Collect information about perceptions of contribution in addition to the metrics typically collected (i.e. service hours, academic performance, membership and retention numbers). We need to examine what are the environmental factors influencing fraternity and sorority members' experience (good and bad): how can we strengthen the environment to help retain more students? How can we prove the learning occurring in these organizations contributes to preparation for entrance into the workforce in a global society? How can we document the contributions fraternities and sororities make to the campus and community beyond just counting hours? Prove we are distinctive. Prove we contribute in ways positively influencing the lives of our members. When we do that, we may be seen by stakeholders of interest as more effective and relevant.

Q: HOW DO YOU THINK THE FRATERNAL MOVEMENT SHOULD APPROACH ASSESSMENT?

Dan Bureau: I think assessment needs to be embraced as integrated into, not added onto, our work. Professionals do assessment ALL THE TIME but don't call it that. We believe assessment is the large-scale survey or all the focus groups. Assessment happens every day when you ask questions. As you receive answers, you begin to interpret trends. As you interpret trends you make decisions about next steps and possibly changes in your approach. Think about how many meetings we have with chapter leaders. What if we asked the same question to all of them, documented those answers through good notes, reviewed the notes for commonalities, reported on those commonalities to stakeholders, and then developed strategies to advising and supporting chapters based on these common issues? That would be really good assessment, which is entirely about improving your practice. Do your annual assessment of learning outcomes and document metrics of interest, but think of yourself as a person who collects information and uses it to improve practice: then you will be doing assessment.

FOCUSING ON INCLUSION

"THE PLACE WHERE OUR WHOLE SELF MEETS OUR GENDER, RACE, FAITH, SEXUALITY, ABILITY, UNIQUENESS, AND HUMANITY CAN BE EXTRAORDINARY."
-SHANE WINDMEYER

HOW WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND/OR CAMPUS BASED CHAPTERS TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE?

Shane Windmeyer: Let go. Let go of your boxes and labels. We all use them, but they only create easy, overly simplified ways to learn and find quick answers. To be inclusive means to be open to new people, experiences and learning. We must all get to know the intersections of who we are and who our students are. The place where our whole self meets our gender, race, faith, sexuality, ability, uniqueness, and humanity can be extraordinary. Once we have this acute awareness, we are much better at proposing inclusive measures and involving more, truly diverse individuals and ideas into our work.

CONSIDERING YOUR FOCUS ON AND PASSION FOR THE LGBTQ COMMUNITY, HOW HAVE YOU SEEN FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES BECOME MORE/LESS WELCOMING SINCE YOU FIRST BEGAN YOUR WORK?

Shane Windmeyer: I started this work in 1995, and it has all come back to gender – namely gender identity and expression and how we express our identity. Indeed, there has been progress for lesbian, gay, and bisexual people in fraternities and sororities. Like much of the United States and world, the progress is geographically influenced (based on the region, the state or the resources dedicated to LGBTQ work). It is still very fragmented and mirrors the country overall. However, what still seems to be the great measure of discrimination for LGBTQ members is gender identity and expression. For transgender members, we are abhorrently ignorant and complacent. There have been a few moments of hope, and I have not given up. But even in more progressive places, LGB or questioning members must conform to a level of masculinity to be part of a brotherhood and vice versa for sisterhood. Despite greater visibility of our LGB and some trans brothers and sisters, we still have not learned one of the most valuable lessons of humanity – accept people for who they are.

HOW COULD FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES SHIFT THEIR PRACTICES/ TRADITIONS TO BE MORE INCLUSIVE?

Walter Parrish: Although there is no perfect start to becoming more inclusive, a good first step is admitting the ways in which a chapter or organization is exclusive in its recruitment, practices/traditions, and initiatives. I urge members to interrupt, call out, and challenge hegemonic masculinity, racism, xenophobia, subordination and other discriminatory behaviors, within and across groups. And yes, this includes confronting big brothers, big sisters, prophytes, and all other terms associated with alumni who have heavy influence on undergraduate members. Far too often chapters overlook extraordinary and unique students by omitting and ignoring their counterparts (of various identities) during their interactions, programming, and recruitment processes.

Consider the mission, values and goals of the organization and chapter. Recall the paragraphs sitting at the top of constitutions that are often ignored until it is time to revise the document. They are the guiding framework for organizational progress and sustainability. Those words drive the purpose of our groups. Ponder what or who can enhance your organization. What skill sets are needed to develop your chapter and, subsequently, reach its full potential? Once they are identified, seek students who exude the desired skill sets and the tenets of your fraternity or sorority. Let's operationalize values and fulfill the true purpose of our organizations; not our personal beliefs and agendas.

Juan Guardia: Fraternities and sororities need to be more inclusive with regard to their memberships, and I believe it begins at the undergraduate level. Current members come from a more open generation with regard to diversity, social justice, social class, sexual orientation, ability, and so forth. Older generations of members, who may have a different beliefs as to who becomes a member of their organization, need to be challenged to think differently.

Although all fraternity and sorority members are privileged for having been chosen into their respective organizations, that same privilege should be afforded to all students seeking a fraternal experience.

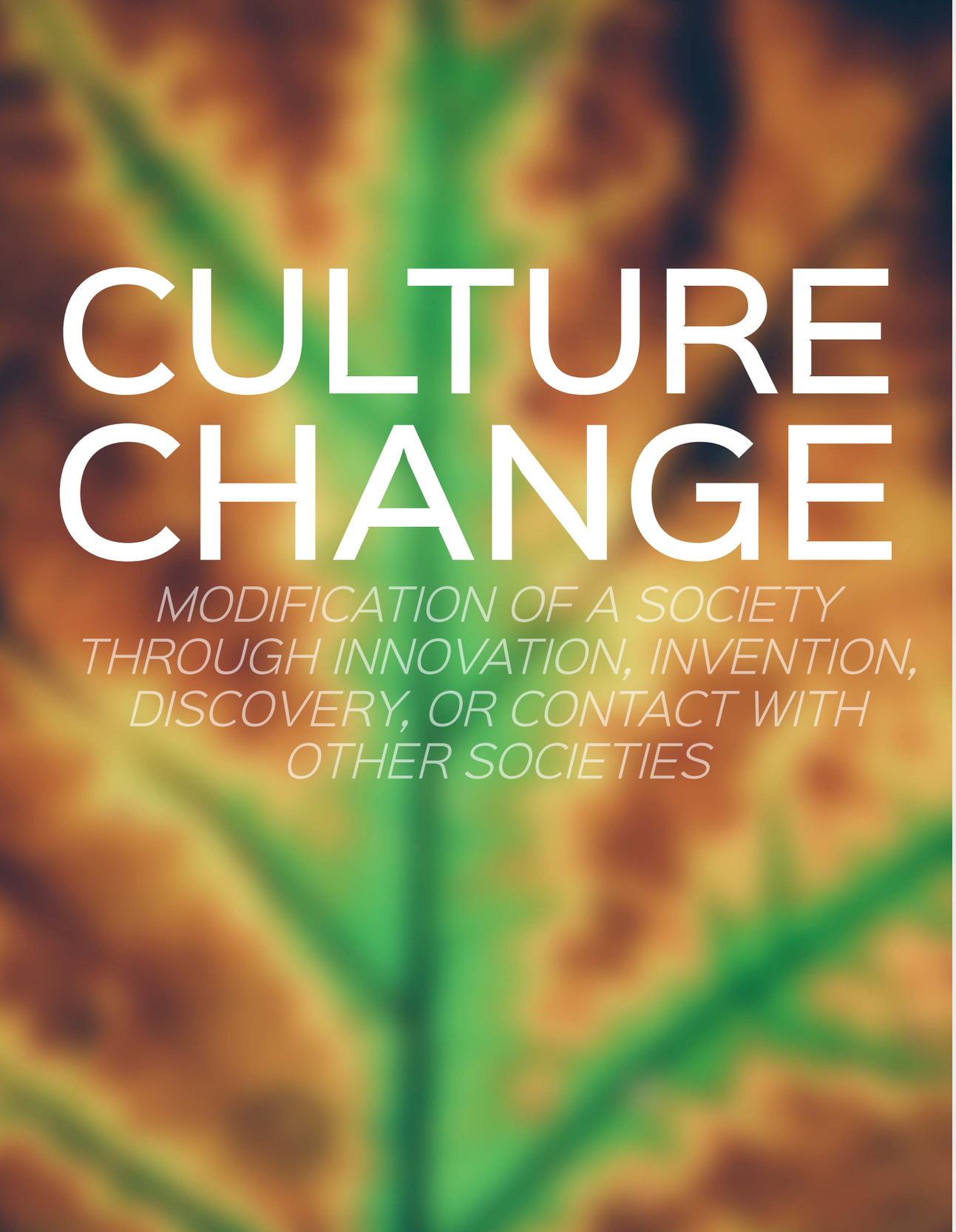
WHAT DO YOU SEE AS THE ROLE OF CULTURALLY-BASED FRATERNITIES/ SORORITIES ON TODAY'S COLLEGE CAMPUSES?

Bella Desai: I believe they help overcome cultural issues and biases one may have accepted as normal. They help pass on cultural practices (holidays, other celebrations) that students are raised with - giving a sense of home and identity and providing a safe place for students to de-stress. Each culture has its quirks or points of frustration. Culturally-based Greek-lettered organizations provide a family setting to be able to gently poke fun at they way "we are" safely. Additionally, during college, where most people "find themselves" and explore other identities, a culturally-based organization can provide the best of both worlds - giving a home base to come back to, while providing support while a member experiences the world.

Walter Parrish: Culturally-based Greek-lettered organizations (i.e. race-, religious-, and sexual identity-based organizations) have similar roles to that of PHC and IFC. That is, many organizations, regardless of council, broadly serve to promote sisterhood and brotherhood, scholarship/academic achievement, and service to communities. Yet, it is important to acknowledge that culturally-based groups have additional roles, particularly at predominantly white institutions (PWI).

Members of culturally-based groups, particularly at PWIs, serve as a network for underrepresented students and those who have been pushed to the margins of campus, including fellow members and non-members alike. For many campuses, culturally-based fraternal groups work in tandem with multicultural affairs-related offices, which are often understaffed and underfunded. Therefore, the programming these organizations provide further enhances the cultural competency of all students and the celebration of underrepresented students. Specifically, the National Pan-Hellenic Council, National Association of Latino Fraternal Organizations, National Asian Pacific Islander American Panhellenic Association, and Multicultural Greek Council are known to critically examine and address systems of oppression (on and off campus), provide inclusive programming, and commemorate students of color. Overall, culturally-based fraternities and sororities help to increase the cultural and social capital of the institution and its students.

"FAR TOO OFTEN CHAPTERS OVERLOOK EXTRAORDINARY AND UNIQUE STUDENTS BY OMITTING AND IGNORING THEIR COUNTERPARTS (OF VARIOUS IDENTITIES) DURING THEIR INTERACTIONS, PROGRAMMING, AND RECRUITMENT PROCESSES."
-WALTER PARRISH



Q: As someone who works with various higher education entities and institutions, what do you see as the keys to implementing cultural change within a fraternity/sorority community?

Gavin Henning: Sustainable change must begin from within. Fraternity and sorority members must see the need for change and want to evolve. Cultural change doesn't happen overnight. It will take years. Since students are on campus for a finite period of time, the success of any cultural change is dependent upon local advisors, leaders in national offices, and fraternity and sorority alumni who can provide continuity and keep organizations moving forward toward the collective vision.

Fraternities and sororities don't exist in vacuums. Cultural change within the fraternity and sorority community reflects some of the issues impacting campuses in general. Fraternity and sorority professionals can become valued partners in addressing these issues.

The process must begin with a vision for what the change looks like and development of a plan to realize that change. Internal and external stakeholders must support that plan for progress.

Kotter (1995) developed an eight-step change process that is considered a model and may be a helpful heuristic to follow. These steps include:

- Establishing a sense of urgency
- Creating a guiding coalition
- Developing a change vision
- Communicating vision for buy-in
- Empowering broad-based action
- Generating short-term wins
- Never letting up
- Incorporating change in the culture

Change won't occur overnight and requires commitment, persistence, and determination.

Reference:
Kotter, J. (1995, March/April). *Leading change: Why transformation fails.* Harvard Business Review,73(2), 59–67.

Rick Barnes: My favorite definition of "cultural change" comes from Merriam-Webster Dictionary when it defines the term as, "…modification of a society through innovation, invention, discovery, or contact with other societies." Unfortunately, I think too many hope to force change through policy, and it never seems to work. When we break down the Webster definition we can come up with workable solutions. Innovation implies a new idea, a more effective process, and better solutions to meet the needs. Invention is a unique or novel method or process. To put all of this in layman terms, just because we've always done it that way doesn't mean it's still the right way to do it. Some of us have been around the fraternity/sorority community long enough to see dramatic change. The culture of our organizations has evolved - in some ways very well and in others very slowly. I do not think it's about policy - in fact, some of the policies have proven to be less than effective. I know it sounds like a cliché but I do believe we must continue to raise the standard, to elevate the bar and to expect our members to live up to the commitments they make through the Ritual. I also believe that innovation and invention involves ongoing education of all entities within the culture.

Q: As someone who works with communities as a consultant, what are the keys to implementing cultural change within a fraternity/sorority community?

Karyn Sneath: Affecting a culture is hard work. It involves tenacity and longevity from its leaders. It involves a degree of pain – and for some communities, the pain of change is simply greater than the pain of staying the same.

There are so many models for creating and sustaining change, and many fraternity/sorority community leaders have tried several over the years. In our associations, we celebrate change and even have awards for implementing change successfully. Those awards are for programmatic successes.

As a community of educators, we don't celebrate learning from mistakes and creating deep change based on what doesn't work. Collectively, there isn't a lot of time spent on epic mistakes and missteps and the valuable lessons learned from them. Very few awards exist which recognize deep and long-lasting positive change. We have a lot of examples of what hasn't worked over the years, yet we try to implement the same change tactics over and over. My Sigma Kappa sister, Dr. Tisa Mason, now a university president, said something that has stuck with me for years. She talked about how we are all itching for best practices. We lead workshops at our conventions and conferences spotlighting some of those tactics, and the attendees try to replicate those best practices in our chapters, inter/national organizations, campuses, etc. But she said, "What if our best practices are really just mediocre practices?" Trading recipes isn't cutting it.

A consultant friend of mine once observed, one can tell what an association values by the types of awards and recognitions it has. What do we as a community of professionals influencing fraternal organizations collectively value and want to promulgate?

Q: What do you see as the barriers to innovation in fraternity and sorority life?

Jeffrey Cufaude: The stakeholders in any one chapter are multi-faceted and diverse. The fraternity and sorority movement? Even more so. While a potential opportunity, this too often is the major barrier. How?

Achieving clarity and shared commitment around the results we want to create is difficult and/or cumbersome. When that clarity exists, opinions either diverge on the best paths to produce those results, or some stakeholders fail to engage. When agreement on paths exist, stakeholders often fight over who has the "right" to do what and process impedes progress. When consensus on roles exists, the community is so fragmented and stakeholders so transient that it cannot sustain the effort that exponential change requires.

And even when people are willing to engage for the long haul, we often are not able to sustain engagement because we lack resources: human, fiscal, and otherwise.

If others believe this narrative contains some element of truth, it is worth noting this has always been the case and is unlikely to change. Innovation is almost always constrained and in many cases, the constraints actually provoke the ultimate innovation. So the strategic question becomes: how do you foster innovation given the constraints outlined above?

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

> THE CHALLENGES I BELIEVE COME ABOUT AS A RESULT OF POOR COMMUNICATION, DIFFERING EXPECTATIONS, AND AN INCONGRUENT UNDERSTANDING OR PERHAPS MISCONCEPTION ABOUT WHY THESE ORGANIZATIONS EXIST IN THE FIRST PLACE. AND WHEN PROBLEMS ARISE ON CAMPUS, FRATERNITY/SORORITY MEMBERS, CHAPTERS, AND NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS ARE ALL QUICK TO HUNKER DOWN AND GO INTO BUNKER MENTALITY. DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION, INSTITUTIONS OFTEN DO THIS AS WELL. WE'RE ALL TO BLAME; IT'S INGRAINED IN OUR NATURE.
>
> LES COOK

HOW COULD MEMBERS, CHAPTERS, PROFESSIONALS, AND/OR NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BETTER PARTNER WITH YOU?

Levester Johnson: Formal structures which present engaging opportunities to shape strategic direction, develop policy and promote common vision for campus fraternity and sorority communities serve as the best way to partner with their universities. The key word here is "engaging" opportunities as we must move beyond simply holding meetings and having gatherings that provide "campus updates" for fraternity and sorority alumni.

An example of the formal structures I speak of includes Butler University's Board of Fraternal Affairs. This group meets 2-3 times a semester engaging representatives from the fraternity and sorority chapter advisory boards and house corporation leadership in active decision making. Through collaboration, engaging discussion, and shared governance, the Board of Fraternal Affairs assists in shaping consistent policies among campus fraternities and sororities, gaining valuable input in direction of institutional strategic planning and sharing critical information regarding changes in federal and State legislation affecting higher education and campus life. The Board of Fraternal Affairs has proven to be a valuable asset to enhance the connectedness and affinity of national and/or local advisory boards to the university and more importantly make an impact on improving campus life not only for members of fraternities and sororities but for the entire campus community.

Les Cook: A few months ago, The Chronicle of Higher Education ran an article titled "Do fraternities have a place on the modern campus?" It was provocative and illuminated the fact the days of fraternity/sorority life as we've known them may be somewhat limited if something doesn't change soon.

College and university campuses are designed to open doors for opportunity by providing a rich environment for student learning, personal/professional growth, and lifelong success. The ideals and values of most fraternities/sororities are similar in many ways, and they too strive for many of these same goals. So you'd think we'd all be better at the partnership piece. The challenges I believe come about as a result of poor communication, differing expectations, and an incongruent understanding or perhaps misconception about why these organizations exist in the first place. And when problems arise on campus, fraternity/sorority members, chapters, and national organizations are all quick to hunker down and go into bunker mentality. Depending on the situation, institutions often do this as well. We're all to blame; it's ingrained in our nature.

If we are committed to the fraternity/sorority experience and desire something different than our present reality, campus and headquarters staff must invest in ways we've not done before. Let's put down our guard, quit worrying about whose way is right, and focus on getting results. While uncomfortable and perhaps radically different, simply surviving is no longer an option, being relevant is. When was the last time your institution sat down with your chapter leaders to discuss student learning or how you all partner to help students be successful? And how about headquarters staff? Why are we not having these conversations? It's time to get this conversation started.

> YES, ORGANIZATIONS NEED FUNDS, BUT WHAT IF, IN ADDITION TO THE MONEY RAISED, CHAPTERS HAD A MEANINGFUL VOLUNTEERING EXPERIENCE WITH AN ORGANIZATION.
>
> CORY ANDERSON

Cory Anderson: Many organizations could have deeper relationships with nonprofits, particularly via service. I see a great opportunity for members and chapters to gain experience volunteering with nonprofits in a professional way. Small and large organizations are typically on the lookout for people who can assist with everything from accounting to marketing. Having that connection would provide experience for collegians and much needed support for non-profits. Additionally, there is an opportunity to connect with nonprofits on a more consistent basis. Yes, organizations need funds, but what if, in addition to the money raised, chapters had a meaningful volunteering experience with an organization. Some chapters and organization do this, however, not at the scale to make a larger impact on large and small non-profits.

From a national level, I would suggest better education as to why a particular nonprofit is connected with an organization. Collegians and alumni should be able to see how a nonprofit fits in with the mission and work of their fraternity or sorority.

Michael Kasitz: One of the ways in which it can be of help to all parties is to partner with campus police to provide educational programs near, or around, recruitment to better aide students in how to conduct themselves responsibly. Sexual assault on college campuses has received a lot of attention recently which is why it is important for fraternities and sororities to educate themselves on this issue. When you look at recent news events like signs being hung outside fraternity houses during freshman move-in day, these situations can easily be avoided by simple programs designed to have people think before they act.

There are also crime prevention programs addressing alcohol and responsible consumption that can help both fraternities and sororities in advance of a potential situation. Prevention is better than helping young men and women after the fact. We will not eliminate all issues, but a partnership from the beginning may prevent some incidents. It also helps to form a relationship with the police so there is, hopefully, an established trust between the organizations and the campus police.

HOW WOULD YOU ENCOURAGE PROFESSIONALS TO ENGAGE STAKEHOLDERS IN THE PROCESS OF CHANGING A CULTURE? HOW SHOULD THEY START TO IDENTIFY THOSE STAKEHOLDERS?

Jennifer Jones: Their first conversations with those stakeholders should not include what the problems are. We need to have solutions-based conversations which include tangible action steps. Your stakeholders are those who come to the table without an invitation.

Gavin Henning: There are stakeholders internal to fraternities and sororities, which include members, advisors, and national officers. External stakeholders include the local community at large, organizations that the fraternities and sororities work with on philanthropic programs, and neighbors to chapter houses. There are also stakeholders who are outside the individual chapters, but inside the institution. These include student involvement/activities staff, fraternity/sorority life staff, student conduct staff, and other college staff who work with fraternities and sororities.

Once the stakeholders are identified, they should be convened as a community to develop a vision for cultural change. The process may include operationalizing the vision and identifying issues, which may hinder the change process, as well as characteristics that may foster it. Strategies can then be developed to achieve the collective vision. The entire community of stakeholders should be part of the process from the very beginning.

I think most college staff see the power potential fraternities and sororities have on campus to achieve institutional goals and would engage in a process to help them achieve a shared vision for success. That process must begin from within and collaboratively engage concerned constituencies.

> “I THINK MOST COLLEGE STAFF SEE THE POWER POTENTIAL FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES HAVE ON CAMPUS TO ACHIEVE INSTITUTIONAL GOALS AND WOULD ENGAGE IN A PROCESS TO HELP THEM ACHIEVE A SHARED VISION FOR SUCCESS. THAT PROCESS MUST BEGIN FROM WITHIN AND COLLABORATIVELY ENGAGE CONCERNED CONSTITUENCIES.”
>
> GAVING HENNING

Karyn Sneath: Dr. Jim Rhatigan, retired Vice President for Student Affairs, at Wichita State University, was the first VP I served as a young campus professional. He very clearly recommended in my first year I go on a “listening campaign.” Then he also wisely advised to create deep, trust-filled relationships so people knew I really cared and we were all on the same team – to strengthen the fraternal experience on campus. We all know of so many successful, long-time AFA members who do this strategically to influence change; we need to do more.

When I lead strategic planning initiatives, I love to have a “wild card” in the group to ask fundamental “Why do you do….” questions. They help those entrenched in the culture and habit to see outside of their own experiences, campuses, and politics and get to some core questions. Wildcards are those who really don’t have a huge stake in the planning process. They aren’t members of fraternal organizations but know the higher education and/or association landscape.

For broader understanding and challenge, go beyond the “usual suspects” when engaging stakeholders such as students, alumni, inter/national organization representatives. We need to hear from police who have a difficult time helping our chapters maintain safe events, health care professionals who treat our members after alcohol-fueled events, counseling center staff who help treat our damaged psyches, development officers who are pained to hear from alumni that they won’t donate to a broken fraternity/sorority community, etc.

Though sometimes parents complain about small potatoes, we need to do more listening. Member parents are quite often the best challengers because they love their child fiercely and want them to be safe, happy, and they want all of us to deliver what we promised during the recruitment process! No one yells louder when their child is uncomfortable. No one pushes to see policies and change faster than a parent whose son/daughter is hurting. Their expectations are high because we’re promising to take care of their children and creating an awesome experience for them. We need to do a reality check.

I think most of our AFA colleagues know how to do this. It’s just a matter of stepping away from the 100-point to-do list and figure out a strategy for change, and then devote time to prodding, pushing, empowering, encouraging, and celebrating.

“Fraternities and sororities can be the training ground for our future world leaders providing opportunities and experiences for vital skill development. Fraternity and sorority professionals will need to develop the competence to assist student leaders and general chapter members to nurture these skills.”
- Gavin Henning

A CLOSER LOOK AT OUR PROFESSION

DEFINING ROLES:
CAMPUS STAFF & HEADQUARTERS

Q: WHAT DO YOU VIEW IS THE ROLE OF CAMPUS STAFF WORKING WITH FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES?

Rick Barnes: We consider the campus staff to be our partners in the industry. We even recognize these, and many others, through what we call our "FarmHouse Friends." We hope to work cooperatively with our campus friends to provide the best membership opportunity for our members who are also their students. Furthermore, we recognize that the campus serves as the host of our chapters, and without the campus and their students, we wouldn't have a presence in higher education at all. Failure to recognize this partnership can lead to an unfortunate relationship and those who suffer the most become the students we all serve. We always hope those working with our chapters are qualified, adequately educated and personally committed to the welfare of these students. Fortunately, we find this to be the case in most of the situations where we have a chapter. Of course, a partnership is a two-way street - I believe part of the "role of campus staff" is to maintain their end of the partnership which includes, at least, maintaining a relationship with the headquarters staff of each recognized chapter on their campus, continuing an open dialogue with the headquarters staff as it pertains to both the successes and challenges they recognize through their community, and being available to assist headquarters when necessary to address chapter issues within the local community. Ultimately, in the same manner which a college/university would hope their athletic programs are the best in the nation, I would hope the campus staff would work to provide an environment in which their fraternity/sorority community could also be recognized as the best.

Q: WHAT DO YOU VIEW IS THE ROLE OF A FRATERNITY/SORORITY HEADQUARTERS?

Rick Barnes: The fraternity headquarters handles numerous business activities of the organization, including maintenance of membership records, issuances of various publications, preservation of historical material, maintaining the financial operations of the fraternity, arranging for conventions and conferences, directing the field staff, participating in interfraternity activities, and taking care of volumes and volumes of correspondence. In other words, the headquarters staff often does so much more than most people - members and non-members alike - recognize. Raising the standards in chapter management is also a daily challenge to fraternity national leaders. This includes regularly addressing the most important areas of chapter life, including social and risk management issues, public relations, facility management, membership education, membership recruitment, understanding of ritual and purpose, membership publications, financial management, and chapter morale.

Q: WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING YOU WOULD LIKE FRATERNITY AND SORORITY PROFESSIONALS TO UNDERSTAND TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

Dick McKaig: I believe fraternity and sorority professionals need to understand and focus on the core mission of their work, which I see as human development (or more specifically student development in the context of a higher education environment). The job descriptions and expectations for these positions are varied, challenging, and all-consuming.

The age group you work with can be equally challenging, frustrating, inspiring, and willing to consume all your time. It can be easy, useful, and/or personally satisfying to become focused on improving processes, program planning, creating and enforcing regulations, record keeping, responding to the latest crisis in student behavior, etc. Often the most visible criteria for assessing your performance lie in those areas. However, for a truly professionally enriching career and for a meaningful long term challenge, focusing on student development is the "prize to keep your eye on." As a retiree, when former students comment to me on our work together, they reflect appreciation for the student development opportunities they experienced rather than some specific activity in which they had been involved. We are more important as teachers than preachers.

Q: HOW DO YOU ENVISION THE ROLE OF THE FRATERNITY AND SORORITY PROFESSIONAL EVOLVING WITHIN THE FIELD OF HIGHER EDUCATION?

Gavin Henning: Our global society is changing more rapidly than at any other point in history. Future leaders need the critical thinking and problem solving skills to address challenging situations that haven't even occurred yet. Fraternities and sororities can be the training ground for our future world leaders providing opportunities and experiences for vital skill development. Fraternity and sorority professionals will need to develop the competence to assist student leaders and general chapter members to nurture these skills.

Fraternities and sororities can also play a crucial role in recruitment and retention, another important goal for colleges and universities. Building connections with others and the institution is a key component to retention (Braxton, et al., 2013; Tinto, 1975) and fraternities and sororities are a fundamental structure to develop those connections on a college campus. Fraternity and sorority professionals will need to not only document the percentage of students who are members returning to college each year but also the characteristics of the fraternity/sorority experience that influence these high retention rates.

In addition, fraternities and sororities provide sustained opportunities on college campuses. Being a member of a fraternity/sorority not only promotes recruitment and retention, it can also foster academic success and connect students to their campuses in powerful ways.

There are institutional benefits to student engagement. Alumni, especially members of fraternities and sororities, are engaged alumni (Henning, 2012). Engaged alumni may give back to their alma mater financially or through in-kind service such as participating in mentoring networks, career advisors, college champions, and informal recruiters.

The key to this evolution is the realization that fraternities and sororities can be powerful experiences to achieve many institutional goals. However, fraternity and sorority professionals are often forced to spend time attending to the negative aspects of these experiences: addressing hazing, countering alcohol misuse, and attending to issues of intolerance. While these issues must be tackled, fraternity and sorority professionals must also realize the responsibility they have to help members (and alumni) become more connected to their institutions and to foster key skills for a global society.

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Q: WHAT CAN FRATERNITY AND SORORITY PROFESSIONALS DO TO CREATE MORE INNOVATIVE PRACTICES WITHIN THE FIELD?

Jeffrey Cufaude: Innovation is about making things better … exponentially and incrementally.

The existing ecosystem for fraternity and sorority professionals seems adept at fostering innovative practices that regularly produce incremental (both small and large) improvements: cross-pollination of ideas and collaborative experimentation, sharing leading edge practices and evidence-based decision-making, diversifying connections and deepening trust among stakeholders, and looking outside the communities for ideas and inspiration.

These are all routine practices of innovative individuals and organizations. Do more of them.

What seems lacking, what may be the critical opportunity, is the framework, support, desire, and demand for innovations producing exponential gains … radical new levels of value creation and improvement.

This level of performance requires at minimum (1) clarity around what Clayton Christenson calls the Job To Be Done … the ideal value that you are trying to create, and (2) a perpetual feedback and learning loop that involves more rapid prototyping and experimentation leading to significant investment in the most promising practices.

An Innovation Summit with immersive training by innovation experts outside the community coupled with a major innovation grants competition (funding both micro-grants and TED Prize-level wishes) might jump start this new level of innovative practice within the field.

As a faculty member teaching in higher education graduate programs, what do you see as the most important skill(s) a new professional working with fraternities and sororities should have?

Juan Guardia: Honestly, I believe individual and group dynamic theories, leadership models, and legal issues are important for today's new fraternity and sorority professionals. Working with fraternity and sorority (and all) students can be a challenge, yet specifically when it comes to the fraternal group think mentality. As such, we are responsible in educating our students about their holistic experiences. Ultimately, when issues come to surface that may challenge any, or all of these experiences, we must be prepared to address and have authentic conversations assisting our students.

FROM THOSE WHO HAVE LEFT FRATERNITY AND SORORITY LIFE

Q: WHAT MOTIVATING FACTORS CAUSED YOU TO LEAVE DIRECT WORK WITH FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES?

Tim Reuter: After nine consecutive years spent working for an international headquarters, I made the extremely difficult decision to turn down a promotion, tender my resignation, and leave direct employment within the fraternity/sorority movement. Recognizing I am painting the landscape with a broad brush, I no longer saw whole-scale, transformational change as achievable among the collective sum of parts that make up the fraternity/sorority movement. Specifically, I saw a pattern of progressive action and assessment ultimately and inevitably result in regression to the mean. Additionally, I witnessed – as participant and facilitator – the disparate sense of purpose and growing divide between stakeholders across the board. This includes but is definitely not limited to:

- The lack of a consistent, demonstrable, and measurable fraternity/sorority value proposition;
- The struggle for organizational/campus and volunteer leadership to embrace, much less commit to, transformational change;
- The increasing focus on reactive programs and services that limit the student/member experience;
- Operating models and bottom-line pressures rooted in fear and insecurity that undermine opportunities within the fraternity/sorority movement to be anything more than purely social in nature;
- Quantitative measures consistently and ultimately trumping the quality of a student/member's experience;

> "Recognizing that I am painting the landscape with a broad brush, I no longer saw whole-scale, transformational change as achievable among the collective sum of parts that make up the fraternity/sorority movement. Specifically, I saw a pattern of progressive action and assessment ultimately and inevitably result in regression to the mean."
> - Tim Reuter

- The unfortunate pattern of what is right being undone by what is easy; and
- The amount of time, energy and money invested in change (or talking about change) that rarely moved to operationalization, much less application, impact and a confirmed ROI.

Q: HOW DID YOUR TIME WORKING IN FRATERNITY AND SORORITY LIFE PREPARE YOU FOR YOUR NEW CAREER ENDEAVOR?

Cory Anderson: Working in fraternity and sorority life helped me to deal with challenging and sometimes confidential situations. There were a few times both as a campus and headquarters professional when multiple challenges arose, and I had to stay cool and see the process through. Additionally, my time in fraternity/sorority life has helped me work with a wide range of people and styles. One of the great things about the field is the diversity of people, and as a relationship manager, I have to be able to connect with people from all walks of life.

Q: WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED SINCE LEAVING FRATERNITY AND SORORITY ADVISING THAT WOULD HAVE HELPED DURING WHEN YOU WERE WORKING IN THE FIELD?

Cory Anderson: I've learned how to take more time for myself and how important it is to have non-negotiables. Fraternity and sorority advising is rewarding but also challenging with long hours. As an advisor, I would stay late and wake up early because I wanted to pour as much as I could into my students. There are certain times when that is needed; however, in retrospect I would have been sure to take a bit more time to recharge. This includes taking a real vacation (or staycation) where I don't check email or attend any work related events. It is a time to get re-energized so I can be more effective and efficient in my work. In addition, part of taking some time for myself includes having a few non-negotiables which include reading, journaling at least once a week, and exercising regularly. Over the years, I have recognized that if I am not healthy mentally, physically, and spiritually, I am of no service to the very people I am trying to help.

Q: WHAT WOULD IT TAKE FOR YOU TO RETURN TO WORKING DIRECTLY WITH FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES?

Tim Reuter: Other than offering consultative support in specific and directed ways, it is difficult to see myself returning to full-time employment within the fraternity/sorority movement. My hopes for any professional in the fraternity/sorority movement are they work for individuals, organizations/institutions, and a movement that is eventually focused on the following:

- Increased self-awareness and decreased self-interest;
- Action and measurable impact over rhetoric;
- Innovation, true design thinking, and an outside-in approach applying current customer experience methodologies to student/member programs and services;
- A comprehensive business model canvas that is not swiftly erased by insurance, risk management premium, and/or hold harmless agreement pressures;
- A collective desire and ability – from front line staff to visible leaders and the inevitable "behind the scenes influencers" – to commit to a comprehensive and fundamental redesign of how the oaths and ritualistic teachings to which our members freely commit are operationalized outside the ritual chamber and "formal business meetings."

PARENTS' PERSPECTIVE

ARE FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES RELEVANT IN TODAY'S COLLEGE COMMUNITY?

Lianne Kowiak: Although my son, Harrison Kowiak, lost his life to hazing during his sophomore year in college at the age of 19, I do not believe these organizations should be banned. Fraternities and sororities are relevant in today's college community IF they are safe, do not condone hazing, and they encourage service, support for one another, foster genuine and healthy longterm friendships and giving back to the community. Greek letter organizations are not "bad." There are some "bad apples" in certain local chapters, some bad local chapters in national organizations, as well as some "bad apples" in positions of authority in the national headquarters, but this does not mean that everything associated with fraternities and sororities should be labeled as negative.

WHAT CONCERNS DO PARENTS HAVE ABOUT THEIR CHILD JOINING A FRATERNITY/SORORITY?

Diane Jablonowski: The parents I have met through various functions at Drexel seem to have two main concerns about their young adult joining a fraternity/sorority: hazing and all the things that could accompany partying to excess. The personal safety of their child is a prioritized concern for all parents.

Lianne Kowiak: Just as you cannot generalize all fraternities and all sororities haze, sadly there have been many cases of hazing and hazing deaths in this country and one death is one too many. There has been a lot of negativity in the media with recent hazing and sexual assault issues on campuses across the country. Why is hazing so prevalent in the United States? The mindset of "I went through it so you need to keep the tradition alive" has to change. I'm all for keeping traditions alive such as celebrating a holiday or getting together for the annual family reunion, but when it comes to putting someone in emotional or physical harm, that is when it needs to STOP!

Parents, fraternities, sororities and universities need to align and work together to keep all parties involved. Parents should do their homework, and check on the university and the fraternity/sorority if there have been any issues related to hazing or sexual assault, for example, and what has been done to ensure it doesn't happen again. When a student is given a "bid" to join a fraternity or sorority, that organization (fraternity/sorority AND university) should inform the parents or legal guardian that their son or daughter is intending to join their organization and what is involved to become a member. There needs to be total transparency.

HOW COULD MEMBERS, CHAPTERS, PROFESSIONALS, AND/OR NATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS BETTER PARTNER WITH YOU?

Lianne Kowiak: The responsibility for monitoring Greek activities lies with the leadership of the local chapter ALONG WITH the university ALONG WITH the inter/national headquarters. All three need to work together as a series of checks and balances to ensure a safe environment is provided to the members. If the university authorizes a fraternity or sorority's existence on campus, then the university needs to be judged exactly the same way a fraternity is judged. You cannot separate the fraternity/sorority from the university. The fraternal organizations AND the university need to keep parents informed of their child's activities to join the organization. Greek letter organizations AND universities should work more with families that have been impacted by hazing, for example. In addition, parents need to be better informed and educate themselves, and have those "tough love" conversations with their children. An organization or task force bringing interested parties representing the groups above need to come together to resolve issues and provide solutions for a shared common goal. It's about preventing these tragedies from happening again.

Two way communication is key on a regular basis. It cannot only happen during National Hazing Prevention week. It needs to be ongoing and "top of mind" throughout the year. There are always new students joining, and they may not know about hazing. Of course I am sad and angry about Harrison's tragedy, especially to something so senseless. Sadly, nothing will bring him back. So all students and another family do not experience the tragedy we endured, we have to move forward. If you alienate and constantly disparage fraternities and sororities, you will have no opportunity, whatsoever, to have them understand your position or enact positive change. We have to all partner together. For the safety of our children, we need to be transparent and informed. Parents need to inform their children before they go off to college. Universities and fraternal organizations need to keep students and parents informed as well.

FROM ALCOHOL USE TO HAZING: LET'S TALK RISK MANAGEMENT

How can professional advisors and national organizations best address the issue of sexual assault?

Kate Schaeffer: There are many roles professional advisors and national organization can take to address sexual assault. First and foremost, they should be open to guiding their organizations toward a culture that neither promotes nor tolerates sexual violence. Advisors should be ready to be challenged by their members and understand change can be difficult but is necessary. They should take a firm stance on this topic and hold their members accountable for any issues that arise. Advisors and national organizations can also provide access to opportunities for training and education to their organizations.

What are the major issues related to sexual assault in the fraternity/sorority community?

Kate Schaeffer: 1 in 5 college women experience sexual assault. As fraternities and sororities are college-based organizations, they are inseparable from these statistics in a way that sports teams and other philanthropic organizations are not. However, sororities and fraternities face the additional issues related to sexual assault and interpersonal violence. While membership in these organizations can serve as a protective factor, and even enable members to access support and help, this same fact leads to some problems related to member behavior. Students who have high social capital can create cultures in which assault is tolerated, or even revered. This is seen through members encouraging sexist remarks, reinforcing violent attitudes and behaviors, or providing a forum to make vulnerabilities of which someone can take advantage. Further, members want to protect their brothers and sisters. When their sister or brother is the person causing the harm, this is a problem. Further, the close-knit community can provide a chilling effect on reporting when members are afraid of retaliation. All too often, this is what we see occur. One person reports an incident, and the friends of the accused student take matters into their own hands. Or, alternatively, we see sisters and brothers who are in disbelief that one of their friends could ever harm someone. A simple "I can't believe they did that" can cause a victim to feel unsupported and feel as though their story will not be believed.

What should fraternity and sorority professionals do to better understand student alcohol use?

Jason Kilmer: I think what is needed to better understand student alcohol use is not unique to fraternity and sorority professionals. Efforts to bridge the gap between science and practice is a shared need and responsibility. There is a lot of great data out there on everything from what contributes to excessive drinking to ways to reduce the harms associated with alcohol use. Unfortunately, a lot of this is published in scientific journals that a non-researcher wouldn't likely encounter. For those of us working on (or with) college campuses, it remains important to understand the motives for student drinking. If it is to reduce social anxiety, what other programming can we provide to address skill-building related to communication, enhancing comfort in social situations, and ensuring this set of skills extends to job interviews and professional interactions later in life. It also remains important to understand what students see as relevant, salient unwanted effects of their alcohol use. Research has demonstrated that even "negative consequences" like vomiting after drinking are seen as neutral or even positive by 23% of students, so when we talk about "negative consequences," we might be making some incorrect assumptions or missing what is most relevant to students. Finally, in a changing legal climate related to marijuana, we must understand the context of college student alcohol, particularly if other substances are on board.

What are examples of work around substance abuse you believe could be adapted to the culture of fraternities and sororities?

Jason Kilmer: We know norms and normative feedback are very influential. If a student believes "everyone drinks" or "everyone drinks heavily," he or she is more likely to initiate drinking, maintain their current level of use or even increase their drinking to match what they perceive the norm to be. The truth is, countless studies show we tend to think drinking is more prevalent than it really is, and we perceive people consume more than they actually do. In fraternities and sororities, there are influences from everything from alumni to portrayals in popular culture contributing to beliefs about what Greek life is like and how things have "always" been. Getting at what our fraternity and sorority members really believe, perceive, and do could be potentially useful. As a member of a fraternity myself, I also feel strongly the notion of brotherhood or sisterhood is a huge strength as part of the fraternity/sorority culture. The person across the hall from you isn't just the person across the hall – it's your brother or your sister. This means our responsibility to that person is different than we might see it for others. The opportunity for bystanders to intervene when there's an alcohol emergency, or to say something outside of acute intoxication when concerned about someone, is tremendous and could have a great impact. Finally, the biggest changes around alcohol use that can happen among fraternity and sorority brothers and sisters can and will come from those undergraduate students. Chapters (and those within them) could and should feel empowered to express what they want to see at social gatherings and what they no longer want to see be part of what's "always offered" – don't want the mystery punch that has way too much alcohol in it be the sole thing offered? Say something or be the chapter that does something different. As with other issues surrounding norms, there is usually much more support for these proposed cultural shifts than people might expect.

If you could wave a magic wand and make one change to address hazing what would it be and why?

Joe Gilman: Hazing is a complex issue, and there are no easy answers to its prevention. It's not about saying "don't haze" or punishing those who do—it's about living the values of the organization one joins. I turned down an invitation to join a fraternity when I was a freshman because the group hazed. I had no interest in proving to anyone I was worthy of their "brotherhood" through physical abuse. It was one of the best decisions of my life because I gave a fraternity expansion consultant an opportunity to state his case in 5 minutes—which became 90. We talked about founding a new kind of chapter on campus that was part of a fraternity founded on the principles of opposition to hazing and living a life based on honor. Those two values were missing from my discussions with other groups. And, without a house or spot for socializing, those values were the topics of our recruitment talks. But these weren't just recruitment topics—these were the fodder for discussions about what hazing was or wasn't and what living the honor principle meant. I later realized all fraternities and sororities espouse noble values—even if they aren't the same as Sigma Nu's. But those values, when lived, are the cornerstones of ethical behavior and key to hazing prevention. So my magic wand would cause fraternity and sorority members to use their rituals regularly, understand those rituals, and practice the lessons in everyday life.

VOLUNTEERS' VIEWPOINT

Q: What would you like professionals in fraternity and sorority life to understand about what it is like to sit in the seat of a board president?

Joe Gilman: Ideally, the board president is the coach of a team setting strategic direction and then allows the staff to achieve the objectives. While they may be seen as the "leader" of the organization, much of their "power" lies in supporting the work of the Executive Director and communicating with constituents. During my term, a key objective—and the source of my greatest satisfaction—was communicating the fraternity's principles, programs, and achievements directly to our members through special video messages. Topics included hazing, alcohol misuse, expansion, and social media. Dialogue ensued as a result—especially as I attended the 12 chartering ceremonies during my 2-year term. But the job also required handling misconduct through enforcement actions such as charter suspension. A professional should believe the board president does not feel a personal impact or loss when misconduct occurs and the organization's name is tarnished—even though the staff is charged with the investigation and implementation of the disciplinary measures approved by the board.

Q: What are your top priorities for your organization as a national fraternity president?

Rick Barnes: As I serve in my fourth year as the International President of FarmHouse, I recognize a few realities - some things never change, yet other things are changing daily, and the board of directors and staff have to find a way to balance both of those. For example, we are always working with an undergraduate membership that changes every year. As the culture of higher education changes so must our Fraternity. While at the same time, many of our issues today were the same issues long ago. We also serve an alumni member who expects very different things from their membership than they did when they were in school. Likewise, what we would consider our "top priorities" follow these trends. I would suggest four top priorities for today:

1) We must make sure we remain current and provide proper education on issues pertaining to our undergraduate members when it comes to the leadership of our chapters.

2) We must provide adequate staff with the right skills and abilities to serve the members.

3) We constantly look at our board of directors to hopefully produce men who are qualified, and then provide them with ongoing education regarding the issues facing the Fraternity so they may make proper decisions as we plan for the future.

4) We must continue to measure all decisions against our motto of "The Builders of Men."

FROM A LONG TERM ADVISOR

Q: Why do you still serve the organization?

Jill Bortel: I personally have been a lifelong member of Alpha Xi Delta, and in April 2018, I will be an Order of the Rose member – 50 years! To me, it [advising] is just part of my life and high ideals. I hope I have influenced many women to Realize their Potential and inspire our sisters. I continue to serve Alpha Xi Delta because I want to give back to the Fraternity for all it has given me. I believe in their mission being to enrich the life of every Alpha Xi Delta.

I also enjoy working with the women and keeping "up to date" on the new trends and what is happening at the university. I feel I can still be productive as a volunteer chapter advisor and the women respect me. I bring a different perspective to the organization by a lifelong active member and appreciate the positive feedback I receive. I strongly believe the women need the guidance and support I provide.

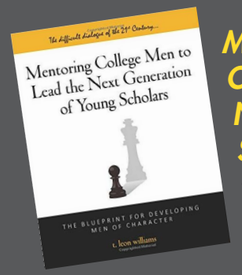
Q: What have you learned from the past 30+ years that you wish you had known?

Jill Bortel: I have learned many things, but probably the most important is to always be open-minded with the women. Through the years, their styles and goals have changed; I need to be aware of each generation of women. I also learned they are very capable individuals, and they need to make decisions and follow through with their goals. I should not always do things for them. I learned to be a pillar of support and to take a firm stand when things are going out of control. I need to be firm at times, yet always caring and available within my schedule.

MEET
Dr. T. Leon Williams
EDUCATOR, SPEAKER, DIRECTOR, & AUTHOR

At every stop in higher education, Williams has enriched the lives of students, faculty, and staff. He takes great pride in challenging individuals to address their own biases, misconceptions, and prejudices for the advancement of human relations and leadership. He also believes in giving back, and has played a major role in the community through volunteerism at head-start programs, high school after-school programs, and habit for humanity projects.

Williams is lending his expert knowledge to a whole new generation of college students in his latest books.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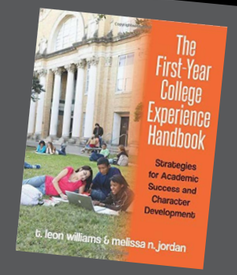
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